3: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1920 RH1 Caucasia RH1
CISCAUCASIA

131 on the south by the Caucasus and the Province of Daghestan; on the east by the Caspian Sea; and on the north by the Kuma-Manych depression, a chain of narrow shallow lakes and river beds filled at certain seasons with water, connecting the Manych, a tributary of the Don, with the Kuma, which flows into the Caspian Sea.

(2) Surface, Coasts, and River System

Surface

133 The parts of the Caucasus range which are included in Ciscaucasia are (1) the *Black Sea ridge*, 155 miles in length, stretching from Anapa on the coast to Mount Oshten (9,369 ft.). These mountains are covered with thick woods. (2) The *Kuban Caucasus*, 120 miles in length, which extends from Mount Oshten to Mount Elbruz. Here the heights vary from 3,000 to 6,000 ft. (3) The *Central Caucasus*, which contains various subdivisions, included for the greater part in Transcaucasia.

[487] The passes across the Caucasus from Ciscaucasia to Transcaucasia are few and are at high altitudes, varying from 9,000 to 12,000 ft. above sea-level.

The northern foot-hills of the Caucasus form on both sides of the River Terek the mountainous region of the Kabarda. North-eastwards from this stretches highland country, which merges into a depression northwards from Stavropol. Between these two there rises the isolated mass of the Beshtau Mountains.

The plains of Ciscaucasia slope gently from the base of the Caucasus Mountains towards the Kuma-Manych depression. In the centre is the Stavropol plateau, which varies in height from 2,000 to 2,500 ft. and separates the tributaries of the River Kuban from those of the Terek and the Kuma. Towards the foot-hills of the Caucasus the plateau is covered with dense forests; on the west it merges into steppes or ends in the reedy marshes of the Kuban delta. In the north

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

watered by the streams falling south and west from the Central Caucasus and Daghestan; but the annual rainfall is low in comparison to that of the Mingrelian Plain, and at Baku registers an average of only 13 inches. The destructive measures of invaders and subsequent desiccation have further contributed to the aridity of the eastern region, and the grassy plains which once supported thousands of Mongol ponies have now degenerated in many parts into desert land. But as it is less fertile, so the Kur Valley is more healthy than that of the Rion. The atmosphere is dry, and if the summers are as hot they are not as humid as those of Mingrelia. In the winter extremes of cold are experienced, and snow lies in many parts of the Kur Valley. The third, or south-eastern, area, including Russian Armenia and Kara Bagh, suffers the violent contrasts of heat and cold of the Armenian Plateau. At Erivan and Alexandropol snow lies until April, while the short summers scorch all vegetation. The Araxes Valley suffers in a lesser degree from the same conditions. 132

Communications.—The chief commercial route in Transcaucasia is the Transcaucasian Railway. The main line runs north from Batum along the Black Sea coast to Nikolaevsk, whence it turns inland, crosses the Rion and at Samtredi joins a line coming from Poti. Thence it runs east-south-east to Gori and Tiflis, traversing the Suram by a tunnel. It follows the course of the Kur until it crosses the Poili bridge, and then runs south-east by Elisavetpol to Alyat on the Caspian Sea, where it turns north to Baku. The total length is 563 miles. The Railway Company further owns a pipe-line following the same route, which is capable of conveying 1,600,000 tons of oil per annum from Baku to Batum. From Tiflis another line runs south by Karakilissa to Alexandropol, whence it branches west to Kars and south-east to Erivan and Julfa. During the war, the Russians continued the Kars line to Sarikamish, whence a light railway connected it with Erzerum. Another light railway connects Julfa with Tabriz. Branch lines also connect the Transcaucasian line with Kutais and the Tkhvibuli coal-fields, with the Chiaturi manganese area, and with the popular health-resort at Borjom. 496

Until the collapse of Shamil[2] Transcaucasia was almost without land communication with the North Caucasus, except by the Daryal Pass. The principal commercial communications between Transcaucasia and Russia still continue to be marine, on the Black Sea from Poti and Batum to the South Russian ports, on the Caspian from Baku to Astrakhan. 487

2 [see cat 116, p 201 ff; the date is 1859—Analyst]

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

491 The Russians have been careful however to develop communications over the Caucasus of extreme military and political [491] importance. A railway from Baku follows the historical passage-way by Derbend and connects with the Vladikavkaz-Rostov line and the main Russian system by Petrovsk, Grozni and Beslan. There is no other railway communication with Transcaucasia, but Russian strategic control has been ensured by four military roads. The main artery, the Georgian Military Road, 382 miles in length, leads from Mozdok via Vladikavkaz and the Daryal to Dushet, Tiflis and Erivan. On the west the Ossetian Military Road runs from Ardon, 20 miles north-west of Vladikavkaz, across the main range of the Caucasus by the Mamison Pass, and reaches Kutais by Oni. Along the formerly impassable Black Sea coast a metalled road now runs from Anapa via Novo-Rossiisk and Sochi to Sukhum and Kutais. On the east a metalled road from Petrovsk traverses Daghestan by Temir Khan Shura and the Vantliashet Pass and leads by Telav to Tiflis. The existence of these four roads is of supreme political importance. The Caucasus is no longer an insuperable military barrier, and the construction of the Black Sea and Ossetian roads has opened two new routes of invasion into Georgia. Other important roads are the lateral road west to east, Kutais—Tiflis—Elisavetpol—Shemakha—Baku; also Tiflis—Kars, Akhaltsikh—Batum, and Akhalkalaki—Ardahan—Ardanuch—Artvin—Batum. Batum has no direct main road connection with Poti or Sukhum.

The Rion is navigable for 88 miles from its mouth at Poti; [492] the Kur for 390 miles.

137 *Timber Resources.*—The Caucasian area is remarkable for the extent and wealth of its forests, the survival of which has been due as much to the sparsity, and consequently inconsiderable needs of the population, as to inaccessibility and impracticability of transport. In the south-eastern regions much deforestation has taken place, and many of the mountain-sides of Russian Armenia, formerly thickly wooded, are now bare of trees. Similarly, since the Russian conquest, the beech-forests of Chechnia have been greatly thinned. Dense forests of beech, oak and conifers still cover the northern slopes of the Caucasus along the banks of the Kuban and the Terek and their tributaries, while there are extensive forests round Lake Gökcha, east of Elisavetpol, and in Talish.

But it is along the Black Sea coast, on the south-western slopes of the Caucasus and in Georgia, where the many streams and shelter from the winds of the steppe are favourable to

491 excellent map on the scale of 1:150,000 of the Klukhor in the above-quoted work by Freshfield: Explorations of the Caucasus, volume 2, pages 190-1).

The "Akhty Army Road"

487 The roads leading from Trans-Caucasia to Dagestan do not differ from the Sukhumi Army road; they are all paths. One of them has been given the title of an Army Road: the Akhty Army Road (Voyenno-Akhtinskaia Doroga), which connects Nukha in northwestern Azerbaidjan with the former fortress of Akhty, on the upper Samur river in the area of the Rutuls and Tsakhurs. The straight distance between Nukha and Akhty is only 55 km, and the Akhty Army Road uses the Salavat Pass, elevation 2896 m, due north of Nukha, which it reaches via the Shin Gorge. It descends from the pass in a northeasterly direction, and leads to the Tsakhur mountain village of Borch or Burzh, from where it goes in a generally easterly direction, following the Akhty-Chai valley, and reaches the confluence of the Akhty-Chai and the Samur. From Akhty down the Samur valley, the road is marked on the map of 1916 as a first-class communication line which ultimately leads to the Caspian coast highway, to Derbent or Kuba, etc. But the entire pathway between the highway Nukha-Zakatali, — from which it

.487 branches off about 14 km. northwest of Nukha before the village of Gyuinuk -- and the Akhty road is marked on the maps at my disposal as a mountain path only, just like the Sukhumi Army Road across the Klukhor Pass, not as a suitable road for vehicles, such as the Oset'ian Army Road. (The Guidebook to the Soviet Union, edited by Radó, p. 792, calls it a road, not a path; however, no details are given.)

There are at least three more pathways leading into Dagestan. One of them goes through an unnamed pass at long. 46° 7' E. and lat. 42° N. connecting the Alazani valley with that of the upper Avar Koisu. The other two connect the upper Andi Koisu with the Alazani valley: the eastern one used the Kodor (or Gudur) Pass (2392 m, according to Stieler), north-northeast of Yeniseli, situated on the highway Zakatali-T elavi: and the other leads from Kakhet'ia to the upper Andi-Koisu, using the valley of the Kakhet'ia river (left unnamed on the map of 1916) and the T'ush-Alazani, one of the source rivers of the Andi-Koisu, south of the Komito or Diklos-Mt'a massif.

Similar pathways exist in the northwestern part of the Caucasus, leading from Abkhazia to valleys of some of the tributaries of the Kuban. The map of 1916 indicates five such pathways between the Klukhor Pass and the upper reaches of the Mzymta valley.